

Immanuel Episcopal Church
Second Street
LaGrange
Fayette County
Tennessee

HABS No. TN-173

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C.

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

IMMANUEL EPISCOPAL CHURCH

HABS No. TN-173

Location: Second Street, LaGrange, Fayette County, Tennessee.
Latitude: 35° 02' 38.5"
Longitude: 89° 14' 30"

Present Owner and Occupant: Immanuel Episcopal Church.

Present Use: Church.

Significance: This Protestant Episcopal Church was first established as a mission in 1832. It was established through the efforts of Mrs. Mary Hayes Gloster, a widow from Warrington, N.C. Her slaves built the church patterned after the church at her former home. The small brick church is notable for its setting, its pristine simplicity and the inclusion of a slave gallery.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Cornerstone laid May 9, 1840. Consecrated for worship, 1843.
2. Architect: Not known. However, it is known that the slaves built the church.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The lot upon which the church building stands has not been conveyed or recorded in Fayette County Deed Books. In all probability it was conveyed by the founders of LaGrange before the county began to keep records; however, its transfer to the church, which could not have been earlier than 1832 nor later than 1840, was not recorded either.

The original church property included Lots 115, 118 and 119. The church has since acquired Lots 122 (1875) and 111 and 114 (1972). These deeds are recorded, but do not refer to the site of the historic structure.

4. Alterations and additions: The original vestry was replaced after the Civil War.

The church is currently undergoing restoration. It had previously been restored in 1968.

(Other information was not recorded at the time of this survey).

- B. Historical Context: Most of the history made here has been ecclesiastical; however, it was for a time used as a hospital for Union soldiers during the Civil War. The Federal occupation of LaGrange began in 1862 under Colonel John K. Mizner.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The 1840s frame church is a one-story rectangular structure. It has a parapeted front and Gothic pointed-arch windows. Its interior features include a columned slave gallery, a wainscot and paneled pews.
2. Condition of fabric: The building is in excellent condition. The porous hand-made brick is in need of sealing.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 65' north to south; 40' east to west, including the 15' x 18' room projection to the south. The front and side elevations are each three bays long. The church stands one full story with a gable roof; the dimension to the top of the parapet on the north front is 37'; to the top of the cornice is 24'. The shape of the church is that of a rectangle with a rectangular room projection on the south end slightly off center.
2. Foundations: Brick.
3. Walls: The walls are of hand-made brick of red color and are laid in Flemish bond. Wall thickness is 17". There is a stepped brick and concrete base at the lower end of the walls. The base is 14" to 15" high. Stucco covered brick pilasters (2'-5-1/2" x 4" deep) are located at the corners of the building and at the mid-points along the flanks. The side pilasters have a simple carved wood Ionic capital. Pilasters and volutes are white. The north facade was originally stuccoed but the ivy vines have worked most of the material off.
4. Structural system: The church has brick bearing walls (brick measures 2" x 4" x 8" with mortar joints of 1/2" to 1") with a heavy timber roof system. The floor is supported by 3-1/2" x 10-1/2" joists 23" to 25" on center, which in turn are supported on 7 3/4" x 9-1/2" beams spanning brick piers of 12" x 12" and 12" x 18". The roof is carried by three king post trusses and by two incomplete trusses. The trusses span east to west; the incomplete trusses are located at the north front end. The major timbers are of cedar and white oak, with some pine used for joists, rafters, and braces. The major members measure 9" to 10" square and are

hand hewn. The joists parallel the trusses and are supported by the exterior wall and a center beam spanning between trusses. The rafters also parallel the trusses and are laid in two spans. A 7" x 7-1/2" cross beam spans the trusses and collects the rafters. The timbers which were to support the proposed tower are still in place. A cradle is created with 9" to 10" square beams and they support the 9" to 10" square posts. They are diagonally braced. Mortise-and-tenon joints, peg construction and cut nails are used.

5. Porches, stoops, etc.: There is a brick stoop at the north front of the church. It has four brick risers of 8-1/2" (treads = 12-1/2") and a platform of 3'-6-1/2". It is 7'-4" wide and has a brick pier on either side. The stoop at the door on the east side of the south room projection has one riser (6") and a platform, with an 8" riser to floor level.
6. Chimneys: There are twin stucco covered brick chimneys at the south wall of the main portion of the building. They stand 3'-11" at their tallest on the slope and measure 1'-1" x 1'-5". The tops are tapered with the placement of soldier bricks on an angle to close over the flue opening. The chimneys are no longer in service.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The north front entry is a double door set in a 6'-10" wide by 9'-9-1/2" high opening. Each door leaf is 3'-5" x 9'-9-1/2" x 2-1/2" and has one large recessed panel. The door to the east side of the south room projection is 2'-10-1/2" x 6'-11" x 1 3/4". It is a new door which replaced the damaged original four-panel door.
 - b. Windows and shutters: There are Gothic pointed-arch windows on the flanks of the church, three on each side. The sash is of recent vintage, being placed there during the restoration. While they capture the spirit of the original openings they do not follow the exact configuration. They are four lights wide and the vertical lines flow into curves to close out the curves of the top sash. The bottom sash are four lights wide and three high; the upper sash is three lights to the breakline. The rough opening is 5'-2" wide by 13'-4-1/2" from sill to apex of the arch. The sash is 4'-1-1/2" wide. The original sash were six lights wide instead of the present four and the crossing of curved mullions at the top became more complex as it created more and smaller lights. The original sash would have given a stronger sense of verticality. The original sash were discovered when the closed openings were

cleared for placement of the new sash. For many years only the lower portion of the window openings were glazed. The sash were packed into the upper reaches of the two northernmost windows on each side (one on each side).

The windows on the flanks have dark green painted shutters which operate and correspond to the shape of the windows. Upper and lower portions of the shutters operate independently so as to be able to recall the original aspect of the exterior when the upper portions of the openings were closed off. The shutters are new.

On the front of the building there are stucco-faced recessed openings, one to each side of the door. It is conjectured that they were intended to be window openings because they correspond to the openings along the flanks and in wood trim. The gallery within however would have posed a problem in relation to the openings on the exterior. The problem exists on the sides but is not objectionable. Architects think that the gallery was added later but evidence is too scanty to be sure. Above the entrance door is a pointed-arch with a rough opening of 6'-0" high and 7'-2" wide with the springline the sill height. The recess is brick with a stucco covering.

There are two small double-hung windows on the rear room projection. They measure 3'-1" x 4'-7" on the south side and 3'-1" x 4'-5" on the west.. The double-hung sash has six lights each.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The gable roof is terminated on the north end by a parapet wall and is exposed at the south rear. The gable roof to the smaller rear projection is lower and butts into the south wall of the major portion and is exposed at the southern end. The roof slopes are about thirty-one and a half degrees. The parapet on the north front has a 12'-7" raised center.
- b. Cornice, eaves: There is a box cornice on the flanks of the building. It measures 1'-6 3/4" high and projects 1'-4 3/4" from the wall. Only part of the cornice molding carries around the south gable end.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans: There is a single interior room for the sanctuary. It measures 50'-4" x 36'-3" x 20'-2" high and has an 11'-3" gallery at the north end. A door to the right of the altar at the

south end of the room leads to the sacristy 14'-8" x 15'-3" x 11'-8" high. In the southeast corner of this room there is a small bathroom built in 1968.

2. Stairways: A dog-leg stairway with a bend to the left provides access to the gallery over the north end of the sanctuary. The stair is located in the northeast corner of the church. It has twenty risers (first riser is 8"; the rest are 7-1/2"; treads are 11-1/2" with 7/8" nosing). The first six risers are straight, followed by three wedges and ten straight. At the southern end of the church there are two raised levels in the area of the altar. One is 8-1/2" above the floor and measures 11'-2" x 16'-7"; the other is 5 3/4" higher and measures 5'-0" x 7'-3".
3. Flooring: The original 6-1/4" to 7-1/2" pine floors boards are still in place.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls are of wood lath and plaster with a smooth finish and painted white. There is a vertical board wainscot 3'-7" to 3'-9" high and painted white. The ceiling is of white textured plaster (a new surface finish). During the Victorian Period a wood vaulted ceiling was inserted into the sanctuary. It has been removed.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: A 2'-9" x 6'-11" x 1 5/8" four-panel door provides access to the sacristy. There is a flat board motif in the form of a pointed-arch above the door. The boards were cut in an attempt to create the arch form. A 2'-0" hollow core door to the bathroom and a 3'-0" hollow core door to a closet are the only other doors within.
 - b. Windows: (Not recorded).
6. Decorative features and trim: The pews in the church are copies of the original pews which disappeared during Civil War occupation. Tradition states that the Union troops used some of the pews for coffins. The pews are of plain board construction with a simple panel motif on the ends.

Four simple 9" round columns support the gallery and four 7" columns above them link to the ceiling. The gallery has a solid railing with plain square inset panels.

At the altar end there are two fluted pilasters supporting an entablature. This is an isolated element and is a wall application. Within the pilaster/entablature composition are

three Gothic arches carried on pilaster strips. The arch in the center is wider and higher. The altar is enclosed in a railed compound with pointed-arch splats.

7. Hardware: The hardware on the front door is especially noteworthy. The original cast-iron box lock with its brass key are still in use. There are cast-iron strap hinges and vertical bolt. Other hardware is either replacement or not as noteworthy.
8. Mechanical equipment: Full air-conditioning was provided in the 1968 restoration. Free-standing stoves provided heat prior to this time (they have been removed). There is full electric service in the building. Plumbing was added in the rear of the building in the restoration.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The church is located on the south side of Second Street between Chestnut and Walnut and is situated about 50 feet from the street. The building faces north.
2. Landscaping: Along the east and south sides of the church is a heavily wooded growth about 25 feet away from the building. The other sides are grassed and have single trees scattered around. There is a large Water Oak tree (36" diameter) in the front of the church. Ivy vines cover the north front of the church and other foundation plants are found at the north and south ends of the building. A brick walkway (4' wide) connects the building and the street.
3. Outbuildings: None.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Early Views: There are a number of photographs, mostly of the northwest quarter of the building and poorly reproduced in newspapers from the 1930s to date, in scrapbooks kept in the church library. These photographs show that there has been no significant change in the building except for fenestration (now partially restored) in modern times.
- B. Bibliography:
 1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Property Records, Fayette County Deed Books. (Name and address of repository not given).

"Minutes of Immanuel Episcopal Church, LaGrange, Tennessee, Fayette County," Historical Records Project No. 165-44-6999, Works Progress Administration, n.p., n.d. This covers the period 1848-57, with some gaps; it is found in typescript in the Tennessee State Library.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Davies-Rodgers, Ellen. The Romance of the Episcopal Church in West Tennessee. Brunswick, Tennessee: Plantation Press, 1964, pp. 91-6, 195-202, et passim.

DeBerry, John H. "LaGrange - La Belle Village," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, XXX, 2 (Summer, 1971). pp. 1-21.

"History of LaGrange," Memphis Commercial Appeal (July 17, 1932). Journal of the Proceedings of the Twelfth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee, Held at Immanuel Church, LaGrange, on the 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th May 1840. Nashville: S. Nye and Co., Printers, 1840.

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Summer 1972

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PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This 1972 project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the Tennessee Historical Commission and the West Tennessee Historical Society. Under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, the project was completed by Robert C. Giebner (University of Arizona), project supervisor, and Richard H. Hulan, project historian (Nashville), with architects James D. Skelton (University of Illinois) and Mark D. Frederickson (University of Arizona) and student architect John P. Vergos (University of Tennessee) and Darrell K. Pattison (University of Cincinnati) at the Memphis, Tennessee field office on the campus of Memphis State University.

The written data was edited in August 1985 by Susan McCown, HABS Architectural Historian in the Washington, D.C. office, for transmittal to the Library of Congress.

The photographs of the church were taken in March 1974 by Jack E. Boucher, HABS staff photographer.